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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, October 29. 1695.

Quest. 1. THE Party who sent you the 5th quest. in your Saturdays Mercury, *sometime since Printed, Commission'd me to tell you, your* unfair solution *of it is very ill resented: and for the following reason, for that you have thought fit absolutely to forbid a* Fine young Lady *(and that with the seeming* Authority *of a* Father-Confessor) *the* Company, *and* Conversation *of a certain Gentleman, who (tho he does not profess himself one of those Cold Complexion'd Disciples in the Schools of* Plato) *has ever made it his* Industrious care *to* Treat *that* Person, *with all the* Honour *and* Respect *due to her great merits; and if at any time, he has by too* free *a* Carriage *and* Behaviour *given her some* little reason *to believe that his* well-grounded passion *would at last (if suffer'd to continue his* Visits) *grow* Criminal, *and by degrees very* naughty; *the too* forward *Rash youth does publickly declare he is, in this matter, the most unhappily* Misconstrued *man in the world: But if after all, he has ever made any* faint attempts *(for surely they could be no other) against her* Honour, *they serv'd onely, for what they were possibly at first intended, to beget and raise in him a higher Opinion of her* Chast Vertues; *as our Great Generals, we know, oftentimes attack the* strongest Garrisons, *tho at the same time, they can expect nothing but a* Brave Repulse, *and by consequence, to come off* Lofers *by the* Bargain. *The Application I leave to that worthy Gentleman, who has taken upon him not onely to give a Bare answer to a knotty question, but very nicely to distinguish upon it: whom I have a double reason to believe of that Honourable (tho despised) Tribe of* Levi; *first for his subtile way of* Arguing, *and then for Backing those powerful* Arguments *by* Scripture *Authority; where (with a Gravity becoming his Function) he tells her Ladiship, she must* fly *whilst she may do't with* Honour, *which is undoubtedly in such cases most adviseable; for, says he, our Blessed Saviour,* &c. *Now to intermix* Scripture *with* Love Affairs *or every little* Town Intrigue, *is, in my opinion, full as absurd and Ridiculous, as when Mr.* Bays *pretends to* Pun *in* Heroicks. *The next thing that induces to Rank him in the* noble order *of* Priesthood, *is, to find him talk so* feelingly *of* Matrimony, *and if there be a good jointure in the case,* &c. *So whip Sir away instantly with her to the Church (for 'tis, I hope, a very pardonable piece of presumption to suppose a Lady* single) *tho, I could tell him, she has been a wife, above these* seven years. *The* Pious woman, *'tis true, was well inclined (as appears by the latter part of the quest.) and would willingly have shew'd her Christian-like Temper, in* forgiving, *&c. If the nice* Squeamish Casuist, *her* Spiritual Guide, *would have vouchsafed to have given leave, and not have Officiously interpos'd his strain'd Comments, and needless Glosses on so obvious a Text. I desire you would, in your* Tuesdays *Paper give me your thoughts of what we call* Platonick Love: *whether it be not a thing purely* Notional, *and consequently exists onely in some whimsical Brains, or if real what kind of* self-denials *are necessary in order to the speedy practice of a* virtue, *so very difficult (if not directly contrary) to* Flesh *and* Blood? *By this, Gentlemen, you will infinitely oblige one, who (living under a* private *and* obscure Character, *in the world) has no Ambition to be known to your Learned Society, by any other name or Title, than that of* Philastet.

Answ. Whether Mr. *Philastet* be the person really concern'd in the query that he mentions, or only a *well-wisher* to such kind of *affairs*, 'tis much the same to us; nor can any thing he advances either change our minds, or *weaken* what we have said to the Lady, we hope, with good success, or else why shou'd his Friend or he be so much concern'd? We never chose our selves confessors to the Lady he mentions, but if she first askt our advice, we were obliged to give it, and have done it plainly and faithfully. And how industrious this Spark has been to treat her with that honour and respect due to her vast merits (which it seems he thinks is but very little by what follows) may be easily seen by this confession below, that his too free, forward, and rash carriage and behaviour, (he wou'd have been free with a vengeance) may have given her some little reason to believe his well-grounded passion, as he calls it, wou'd at last grow criminal, if his visits were still admitted. Yet he wou'd not have it misconstru'd by any means, no, not tho he shou'd ever have made any faint attempts against her honour, (which is but very faintly deny'd) yet after all he wou'd fain come off with that stale wheedle, which one wou'd think Lust it self shou'd be now asham'd of, 't has been so often used and baffled. That all this was to try her virtue, much like trying a fine venice glass by giving it a sound bang with a Hammer? For either he thought she wou'd have yielded, and then you must believe he wou'd have been so very *Platonical* to have sheer'd off again, and no further harm done; or else that she never wou'd have consented, and then 'twas the highest affront to her to offer any such thing, nay, 'twas the blackest villany to do it, considering she had been, as this Letter acknowledges, a marry'd wife these seven years: 'T had been therefore much fairer play for this wondrously virtuous, yet *Antiplatonical Gentleman*, to have told her downright his business at first, to have appeared like a *Satyr*, not a man, in the ugly dress of Lust, and Adulterous Lewdness, and not in the honest Garb of honourable Love, which indeed is far too short, in the present case, to hide such a *Cloven footed Priapus*.

As for your happy guesses that the person who answer'd this query is a *Clergy-Man*, wee'd fain know what Treason 'tis if he be? And who more proper to answer it? For your Compliment of his being of a despis'd Tribe; 'tis enough to say that nothing can make 'em despis'd but vice, or ignorance, or meanness of Spirit, and sneaking to those who have no more wit, grace, nor manners, than to use 'em ill, or to think lightly of an order of men whom the most barbarous Nations upon Earth have respected and honoured, nay, thought it an honour to their Families to Dedicate the best of 'em, their Eldest Sons, to the *Priest-hood*. For the intermixing Scripture in Love Affairs, we don't wonder that the querist or his Friend shou'd be so warm against it, since that is so full against them; but whether it has been a proper method, the success has evinced. For the answerer of the former query, his speaking so well of Matrimony, he does no more than has been the practice of all civiliz'd Nations, and written too, since the beginning of the World, as well as of the inspir'd writers; tho we don't wonder any persons shou'd be displeas'd with it, who have quite other thoughts of that *honourable state of life*, and quite other designs against it: And by the way 'tis worth remarking how soon the mans mind is chang'd, who has towards the end of his query so absolutely forgot those wonderful chast virtues which he was so much admiring in the Lady towards the beginning of his Letter, that he broadly reflects upon her as very kind and coming already; what then wou'd he have done if she had never askt any such question? To conclude, if he'ed know what the *Platonical Love* is which he talks of, wee'll tell him what it often is, as he very well knows, 'tis a fair pretence to cover vice, and ruine virtue. If any thing else, 'tis a generous Friendship, without any thing of Sex intruding; therefore he need not tell us he himself believes there can be no such thing in Nature.

Quest.

Quest. 2. *I'm a young man who live in* Hartfordshire *about twenty years of age, and am very much troubled with a Beard, which is so long that people call me an* old man. *Pray what remedy shall I use to stop the immoderate growth of it?*

Answ. O, nothing more easy! 'Tis but to burn it off once a day for a month together with a little *lighted brown paper*, (as you have seen the good House-wifes serve the *Down* of *Fowls* when they are roasting 'em) and this wee'll undertake shall prove an infallible remedy.

Quest. 3. *I have often experienc'd, and in the general found it hold good, that if you measure the neck of one of the fair sex, and double the string, if the party holds the two ends just in her Teeth, and the string will go clear over her head, she is certainly no maid, but if the string cannot be got over, you may be sure she's a Virgin. This is certainly matter of my own experience; I desire the reason how it comes to pass.*

Answ. A rare way of Tryal for a *Spanish* Brother or *Dowegna*, if it wou'd but hold good, the very fear of which might do great things if people cou'd but be perswaded to believe it. For our parts we must confess our selves arrand Infidels in the point, notwithstanding your many experiments; nay, you own your self that you have only often experienc'd it, and in the general found it hold, which may be purely accidental, for you own that it does not always hold.

Quest. 4. *Suppose one shou'd know one to be a* Witch, *and shou'd do any thing that shou'd cause her to burst, whether in so doing one shou'd not commit a sin against God, who has positively said, Thou shalt do no murder?*

Answ. To use any Magical Ceremony to be reveng'd on any person, supposing we were sure they had injur'd us in the same manner, wou'd be no better then downright *Witchcraft*, and to Drive out one Devil by the help of another. But to use natural means to defend ones self from the attempts of those wretched and Malitious Creatures, is, we think, as lawful as to resist a *Thief* or a *Murderer*; consequently, when they appear to torment us, be it they or their shapes, let the Devil and them shift it for that matter, we shou'd make no scruple to strike or stab at them, and think if we kill'd 'em while they were in the act of Tormenting us, 'twou'd be no more than we were warranted to do by a principle of self-preservation.

Quest. 5. *A Gentleman for a considerable time has made courtship to a Gentlewoman of equal fortune, and has so far gained upon her, as to get her promise of Marriage; the young woman having neither Father nor Mother, her other friends who have an equal respect to her, would perswade her from it, knowing the man to be so unaccountably jealous of her, and naturally of such a temper in all respects, that he is uneasy at her speaking to, or looking on a man, or going abroad with her Friends of her own Sex, who as well as her self are of untainted virtue, and her conversation is of a free and friendly kind to all, and of a very good humor; her friends would desire your opinion whether she may not justly quit her self of her promise, and whether you think it is possible to be happy with such a temper? Your speedy answer to this will oblige, your respectful servant.*

Answ. She ought to have taken more care before she had promis'd him, to have known his Temper and Disposition. But now that's past, if she cannot break him of it, she may, we shou'd think, easily order matters so, considering his Disposition, as to make him break it off of his own accord. Otherwise if she marry him, she's not like to be very happy with him, besides, that he makes his own virtue very suspicious by being so jealous of anothers.

Advertisements.

☞ *PROPOSALS for Printing the LIFE of the Reverend* Mr. *Richard Baxter*; Wherein he gives an Account of his most Considerable Actions, and the Remarkable Providences that befel him: Together with an *History of the many Alterations* he lived to see, &c. *Left under his own Hand*, at his Decease, as designed by him for the Press. 'Tis proposed to *Subscribers at* 17*s. and* 6*d. per* Book in Quires (7 paying for 6) but to all others not under 20*s* each Book in Quires. *PROPOSALS*, giving a fuller Account of this Work, are to be had of the Undertakers, *Thomas Parkhurst*, *Jonathan Robinson*, *John Lawrence*, and *John Dunton*,

☞ The Design for Recording the most Remarkable Providences of Judgment and Mercy, &c. Which have happened in this Age, (by the Reverend Mr. *Turner*) having been much approved of, as appears by the numerous well attested relations which have been sent to him from many parts of the three Kingdoms, the said work will be put to the press with all convenient speed, altho the undertaker should receive no more subscriptions than what he has already; but at the request of those who live Remote from *London*, he further gives till the 20th of *Jnuary* next, for sending in Subscriptions. Proposals, and Specimens giving a full Account of this History, are annext (together with a *Scheme* of the work it self) to the end of Mr. *Turners* Essay upon the Works of *Creation and Providence*, lately Printed for *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in *Jewen-street*.

☞ *The Third and Fourth Volumes of the* FRENCH BOOK of MARTYRS (for which no more Subscriptions will be taken in) will be Published with her late Majesties *ROYAL PRIVILEDGE*, and are now *translating* for the Press; but being much larger than the *two former Volumes* (for these Two Last Compleat the Work, and contain the *MARTYRDOMS* of all the *French Protestants*, from the beginning of the Reign of *LEWIS* XIV. down to this time) 'twill be a considerable time before they can possibly be ready for publication; but as soon as they are notice thereof will be given in the *Gazette*, by the Undertaker *John Dunton*, at the *Raven* in *Jewen-street*.

☞ On *Wednesday* the 30th of this instant *October*, from 4 in the Afternoon to 8, will be Sold by Auction at the Widow *Balls* Coffee-house, being the Crown near *Ratliff-Cross*, a Catalogue of *English* Books, both Ancient and Modern, *viz.* Divinity, History, Travels, Voyages, Law, Humanity, Poetry, Romances, and in all volums. Catalogues are to be had *Gratis* at Mr. *Pools* at the Half moon under the *Piazza's* of the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, at Mr. *Browns* Coffee-house in *Fanchurch-street*, at Mr. *Hartwells* at the *Iron Gate*, and at the place of Sale.

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